

Stourbridge Area Committee – 15th October, 2012

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Responses to Issues

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Committee of the position regarding issues raised at the last meeting of the Committee.

Background

2. At the meeting of the Committee held on 25th June, 2012, the issues below were raised. Responses to those issues are as follows:-

Regarding the decision of the Committee that a meeting between the member of the bowls club who raised the particular issue, Councillor Mrs Martin and relevant officers in the Directorate of the Urban Environment be arranged, a meeting was held on 4th September at Wollescote Hall.

Arising from that meeting a number of actions were agreed between the parties to hopefully conclude these matters satisfactorily. In respect of those actions a) a report will be presented to the Area Committee at the earliest opportunity on the issue of the restrictive covenant which restricts the playing of games on Sundays which if resolved would enable the bowling teams to play fixtures on Sundays from the 2013 season onwards b) several operational matters were raised which are being pursued in an attempt to get them actioned. The disabled ramp is in order and should be in place shortly and representations have been made to get the toilets/handwash facilities repaired and c) the role that the bowling club has played in both developing facilities on the site and its contribution towards their maintenance was acknowledged. Without the club's efforts the facility would be less impressive and of a lower standard than it is today and this is to be taken into account in the financial arrangements between the Council and the club.

3. Regarding the position of Mrs P Shepherd, a former co-opted member, it has now been established that Mrs Shepherd does wish to continue as a co-opted member. It is accordingly

RECOMMENDED

That Mrs P Shepherd be reappointed as a co-opted member of the Committee for the 2012/13 municipal year representing Local Tenants and Residents.

4. Regarding the appointment of both Councillors Mrs Martin and Perks to the Withymoor Community Association it has now been ascertained that two Councillor representatives will be acceptable. The Association have been notified of the details of the two members.
5. A petition from local residents was submitted complaining of noise and traffic nuisance emanating from a public house in Stourbridge. The Executive Support Team Manager, Directorate of the Urban Environment, has responded to the issues raised and in relation to car parking has informed the petition organisers of the intention to install bollards where appropriate and feasible within the six week period from 23rd July, 2012, to deter irresponsible parking. The subject of the bollards is still under investigation because of the needs of residents to be able to have access to their own properties. In addition a Traffic Regulation Order for the area immediately around the public house was being considered although this will take a while, as due process has to be observed.

With regard to the condition of the flats car park the Housing Manager has arranged for an inspection of the car park surface to be carried out with the Repairs Management Centre. In addition an investigation into the costings and feasibility of installing a barrier at the car park is being pursued.

In relation to noise/nuisance Environment Health Officers are dealing with the noise issues from customers in the smoking centre and in relation to the playing of music from within the public house. The relevant process in relation to dealing with noise complaints has been initiated and the petition organisers have been advised of the position. An initial letter was sent to the Licensee on 5th July and on 12th July a joint visit to the public house was made by an Environmental Health Officer and a Licensing Enforcement Officer. Measures to monitor the level of noise from musical entertainment were recommended to the Licensee who indicated that they would be implemented. The Licensing Enforcement Officer would also write to the taxi firm mainly used by pub customers to warn them against sounding their horns on arrival.

Regarding other allegations of anti-social behaviour the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Development Manager has forwarded the concerns made to the Police at Brierley Hill Police Station who have responded by stating that the matter would be investigated.

6. In respect of a petition opposing proposed tree felling at Stevens Road, Pedmore, the Arboricultural Officer – Environment Management has written to the first named on the petition stating that it was brought to the attention of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the service area concerned and that a meeting was held at the Council House in Dudley on 5th July, 2012, attended by resident representatives, ward members, the Cabinet Member for Transportation and managers from the Street and Green Care Division of the Directorate of the Urban Environment. At this meeting, in accordance with the concerns raised within the petition, a review of the Council's position regarding the trees was promised prior to any further action being taken. It was also agreed that details regarding the planting of replacement trees be forwarded to the nominated representative and that such details include tree planting criteria and species choice used in the choosing of trees for the urban environment.
7. Arising from consideration of Police issues the Group Engineer – Traffic and

Transportation was asked to respond to the person who raised the issue of the opening of the section of the Junction Road playing fields referred to for parking provision and in response the Group Engineer has indicated that grant resources were not currently available for the substantial cost of providing safe parking facilities at Junction Road playing fields.

8. Regarding a question raised by a resident of Studley Gate in respect of a donation of £2,000 that had been made to the Friends of Swan Pool Park the Assistant Director, Planning and Environmental Health has responded to the effect that the Friends of Swan Pool Park still have the £2,000 in their account and were looking to match fund for a grant application once the master plan was complete.
9. In relation to reported road safety issues in the Studley Gate area in particular the issue of the gap by the barrier the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety has indicated that parking on the grass in Whitmore Road near to Studley Gate will be referred to Street Care Highways Maintenance for consideration.
10. In relation to comments made regarding the poor condition of grass verges in Norton and Wollaston the Assistant Director, Planning and Environmental Health has arranged for the matter to be investigated and the Green Care Manager wrote to the member of the public who raised this issue stating 'that due to the wet weather conditions experienced this summer we have experienced exceptional weed/grass growing conditions and restricted weed spraying conditions. The Green Care Team are presenting targeting and working through this increased demand and will bring standards back to an acceptable level'.
11. Regarding a comment from the same member of the public regarding pot holes in the driveway to Wollaston Community Village Centre, the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety has indicated that the driveway to Wollaston Community Village Centre is private and therefore does not form part of the public highway. All action that could be taken in terms of the use of public highway funds has been carried out and arrangements were made fairly recently for pot holes to be filled in the private road. No further arrangements could be made in terms of public highway budgets.
12. Further to the report submitted in respect of Racecourse Lane, Stourbridge – Traffic Movements, the Group Engineer, Traffic and Transportation has indicated that a number of local safety schemes have been introduced in Racecourse Lane in the last few years. The major resource commitment required for either the widening of the road or the introduction of new footways in this lane have not been available in the past and are unlikely to become available in the foreseeable future. The most recent local safety scheme, introduced in 2011-12, has had a positive effect on vehicle speeds. A three year monitoring programme of Racecourse Lane's traffic is currently taking place.
13. Regarding the issue of speeding vehicles in the vicinity of Cobden Street and road safety issues in Studley Gate raised by a member of the Committee. The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety has responded to the member concerned reporting that both locations will be assessed during 2013/14 for possible inclusion in future years annual Local Safety Scheme Programmes, in comparison with all other requests for this service.
14. With reference to member comments regarding the trees proposed for felling in

Stevens Road and the issue of a protocol the Assistant Director, Planning and Environmental Health has reported that Councillors Kettle, Jones and Wilson attended a meeting with Council Officers, residents of Stevens Road and the Cabinet Member for Transportation on Wednesday 4th July, 2012, to discuss tree work at Stevens Road and future measures regarding management of trees in the road. It was noted that a protocol now exists.

Finance

15. There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report.

Law

16. Section 111 of the Local Government Act, 1972, enables the Council to do anything that its calculated to facilitate or is contusive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

17. This report takes into account the Council's policy on equality.

Recommendation

18. That the content of the report be noted and that approval be given to the reappointment of Mrs Shepherd as a co-opted member of the Committee for the 2012/13 municipal year representing Local Tenants and Residents.



.....
Jane Porter
Area Liaison Officer

Contact Officer: Joe Jablonski – Democratic Services
Directorate of Corporate Resources
Telephone: 01384 815243
Email: josef.jablonski@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers

Minutes of the meeting of Stourbridge Area Committee held on 25th June 2012 and associated correspondence.